

24 Cultural Relations in the Plateau of Northwestern America

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of the latter with quite literal accuracy. Often the chief speaks in a voice hardly above a whisper, while the speaker is expected to make himself heard by all, and to provide proper emphasis to what is being said. The herald, on the other hand, is largely a messenger who shouts out the orders and advice of the chief as he rides about the village or camp. He is not held to a literal presentation of the chief's words, but is expected to express the general thought freely and effectively.

In parts of the Plateau the spokesman performs the duties of the typical herald in addition to serving as a repeater. This is true among the Tenino, Umatilla, Nez Percé,²² Coeur d'Alène, Kalispel, Southern Okanogan, and Sanpoil. Among the last two, at least, formal haranguing is a performance of the spokesman-herald in his own right.

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Women occupy seats in council or assembly among a number of central Plateau groups, and in some cases they are eligible to chieftainship. Female chiefs are known to the Southern Okanogan, Lakes, and possibly the Coeur d'Alène. They may have been present in other groups, although most informants deny it today. The Lakes declare that no greater or more capable chief has even been known to them than a particular woman who held office fairly recently. It is quite clear that female chieftainship is here a simple outgrowth of the principle of political and sexual equality.²³

[177] The Shuswap, Lower Thompson, and Carrier occasionally recognize female chiefs as well, but here the implications are quite different. A woman is accepted only for the sake of perpetuating a particular lineage in the absence of a male successor.²⁴ The coastal origin of this practice is obvious.

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

CLASS AND RANK

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Peoples of the Plateau have remained impressively unreceptive to the notions of caste which are so strongly emphasized on the Coast. The only tribes in any way influenced are those in direct contact along the boundary of the two areas. The Plateau attitude is not one of passive disregard; on the contrary, the opposite principle, that of equality of man, is given active and emotional support.

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The Sanpoil are among the most outspoken in this respect. To them

²² Spinden, *Nez Percé Indians*, p. 243.

²³ Cline, *Southern Okanogan*, pp. 95 f.; Teit, *Salishan Tribes*, p. 154.

²⁴ Teit, *Shuswap*, p. 582; Morice, *Canadian Dents*, p. 202.

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further question: Is the vision type identical for shaman and layman? An affirmative answer here finds no exception but the Carrier, where the difference is marked (see above). A further common feature is the possession of greater power by the shaman. But this does not necessarily imply the possession of a greater number of spirits. However, the only exceptions are the Kalispel and Coeur d'Alène, adjacent groups.

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In this connection a statement made by Park requires attention:

Throughout most of the Plateau area, the shaman is set off from other members of the group *simply* as the one who has greater but *not different* power. . . . The shaman is differentiated largely by the amount of power that he possesses and the curative results which he is *thereby* enabled to obtain.⁴⁹

This would apply to the Klamath, as Spier's specific statements indicate⁵⁰ but certainly not to any other Plateau group, the Carrier included. Indeed, actual conceptions are just the reverse of this. No matter how strong a man's power may be, no matter how many guardians he may possess, he is utterly incapable of performing as a shaman unless (1) he has received a definite shamanistic spirit, or (2) he has been specifically commissioned by the spirit at the time of the quest vision, or (3) he has received shamanistic power by heredity. This point can not be too strongly emphasized since an inference like that by Park is so readily drawn from a description of spirits as non-specialized. Park was at the further disadvantage of having available only meager material upon which to base his conclusion; his assumptions grew naturally out of these circumstances.

Accompanying non-specialization—the notion that any spirit is capable of conveying any type of power—is invariably the further belief that upon *particular* occasion a spirit always conveys a *particular* type of power.

Throughout the Plateau (Wishram to Flathead, Klamath to Carrier) male shamans dominate numerically. But equally universally, women are admitted to the profession and considered wholly equal to men in ability and strength. At the mouth of the Columbia, among the Lower Chinook, female shamans are as numerous as male. This is true of other coastal groups as well. In the Plains the male figures almost to the exclusion of the female.⁵¹ The Plateau is obviously intermediate. The unity

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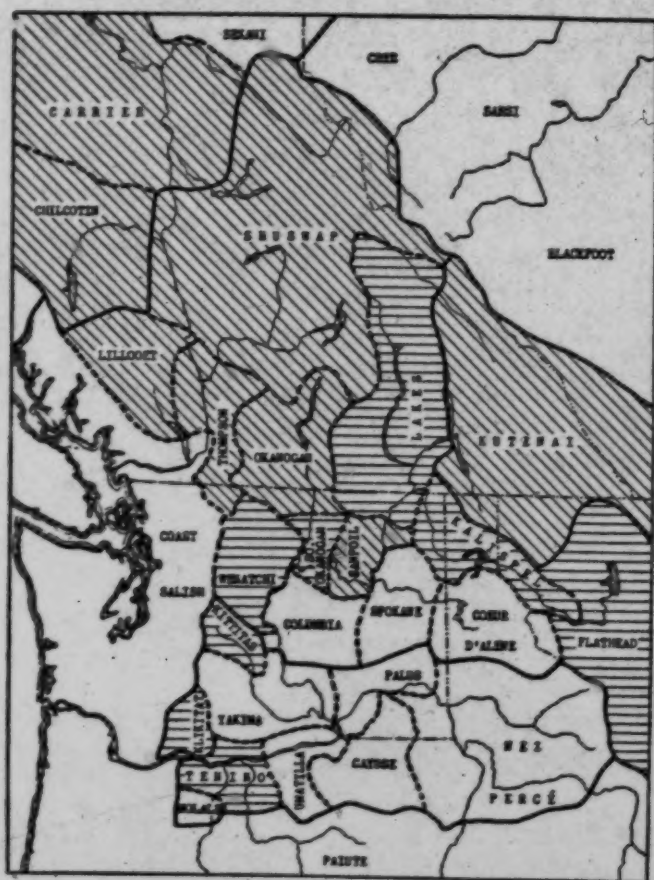
⁴⁹ Park, *Shamanism*, p. 92. Italics mine.

⁵⁰ Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, pp. 107, 123.

⁵¹ Benedict, *Vision in Plains Culture*, p. 2.

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562 of the area is clearly the result of participation by the various groups in
 756 a common tradition. But from an inter-areal point of view historical inference is hazardous since the possibilities are so limited. The intermediacy may be the result of the blending of the contrasting patterns of



MAP 11. Shamanistic specialization of function. *Horizontal hatching:* special powers bestowed by spirit; *diagonal hatching:* specialization by reputation only.

562 Coast and Plains; or, it may represent an independent development. The
 756 latter interpretation is favored by the fact that peripheral tribes of the Plateau do not lean toward the patterns of adjacent areas, but are one with the central tribes.

FAMILY RELATIONS.

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parties are yet children, and such a contract, guaranteed by an interchange of presents, is rarely broken. To give away a wife without a price is in the highest degree disgraceful to her family. Besides payment of the price, generally made for the suitor by his friends, courtship in some nations includes certain visits to the bride before marriage; and the Spokane suitor must consult both the chief and the young lady, as well as her parents; indeed the latter may herself propose if she wishes. Runaway matches are not unknown, but by the Nez Percés the woman is in such cases considered a prostitute, and the bride's parents may seize upon the man's property. Many tribes seem to require no marriage ceremony, but in others an assemblage of friends for smoking and feasting is called for on such occasions; and among the Flatheads more complicated ceremonies are mentioned, of which long lectures to the couple, baths, change of clothing, torch-light processions, and dancing form a part. In the married state the wife must do all the heavy work and drudgery, but is not otherwise ill treated, and in most tribes her rights are equally respected with those of the husband.

When there are several wives each occupies a separate lodge, or at least has a separate fire. Among the Spokanes a man marrying out of his own tribe joins that of his wife, because she can work better in a country to which she is accustomed; and in the same nation all household goods are considered as the wife's property. The man who marries the eldest daughter is entitled to all the rest, and parents make no objection to his turning off one in another's favor. Either party may dissolve the marriage at will, but property must be equitably divided, the children going with the mother. Discarded wives are often reinstated. If a Kliketat wife die soon after marriage, the husband may reclaim her price; the Nez Percé may not marry for a year after her death, but he is careful to avoid the inconvenience of this regulation by marrying just before that event. The Salish widow must remain a widow for about two years,

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765 and then must marry agreeably to her mother-in-law's
 587 taste or forfeit her husband's property.¹⁷⁸ The women
 594 make faithful, obedient wives and affectionate mothers.
 831 Incontinence in either girls or married women is extremely rare, and prostitution almost unknown, being severely punished, especially among the Nez Percés. In this respect the inland tribes present a marked contrast to their coast neighbors.¹⁷⁹ At the first appearance of the menses the woman must retire from the sight of all,

594 ¹⁷⁸ Each Okanagan 'family is ruled by the joint will or authority of the husband and wife, but more particularly by the latter.' Wives live at different camps among their relatives; one or two being constantly with the husband. Brawls constantly occur when several wives meet. The women are chaste, and attached to husband and children. At the age of fourteen or fifteen the young man pays his addresses in person to the object of his love, aged eleven or twelve. After the old folks are in bed, he goes to her wigwam, builds a fire, and if welcome the mother permits the girl to come and sit with him for a short time. These visits are several times repeated, and he finally goes in the day-time with friends and his purchase money. Ross' *Adven.*, pp. 295-302. The Spokane husband joins his wife's tribe; women are held in great respect; and much affection is shown for children. Among the Nez Percés both men and women have the power of dissolving the marriage tie at pleasure. Wilkes' *Nar.*, in *U. S. Ex. Ex.*, vol. iv., pp. 410, 475-6, 486, 495. The Coeurs d'Alène 'have abandoned polygamy.' Stevens, in *Pac. R. R. Rept.*, vol. i., pp. 149, 309; Gibbs, in *Pac. R. R. Rept.*, vol. i., p. 406. Pend d'Oreille women less enslaved than in the mountains, but yet have much heavy work, paddle canoes, etc. Generally no marriage among savages. De Smet, *Voy.*, pp. 198-9, 210. The Nez Percés generally confine themselves to two wives, and rarely marry cousins. No wedding ceremony. Alford, in *Schoolcraft's Arch.*, vol. v., p. 655. Polygamy not general on the Fraser; and unknown to Kootenais. Cox's *Adven.*, vol. ii., pp. 155, 379, vol. i., pp. 256-9. Nez Percés have abandoned polygamy. Palmer's *Jour.*, pp. 129, 56. Flathead women do everything but hunt and fight. Ind. Life, p. 41. Flathead women 'by no means treated as slaves, but, on the contrary, have much consideration and authority.' Hale's *Ethnog.*, in *U. S. Ex. Ex.*, vol. vi., p. 207. 'Rarely marry out of their own nation,' and do not like their women to marry whites. Dunn's *Oregon*, pp. 313-14. The Sokulk men 'are said to content themselves with a single wife, with whom . . . the husband shares the labours of procuring subsistence much more than is usual among savages.' Lewis and Clarke's *Trav.*, p. 351; Dunniray's *Capt. Gray's Comp.*, p. 161; Gray's *Hist. Ogm.*, p. 171; Tolmie and Anderson, in *Lord's Nat.*, vol. ii., pp. 231-5; Ind. Aff. *Rept.*, 1854, p. 208; De Smet's *West. Miss.*, p. 289.

831 ¹⁷⁹ The wife of a young Kootenai left him for another, whereupon he shot himself. Ross' *Fur Hunters*, vol. ii., p. 169. Among the Flatheads 'conjugal infidelity is scarcely known.' Dunn's *Oregon*, p. 311. The Sahaptins 'do not exhibit those loose feelings of carnal desire, nor appear addicted to the common customs of prostitution.' Gass' *Jour.*, p. 275. Inland tribes have a reputation for chastity, probably due to circumstances rather than to fixed principles. Mayne's *B. C.*, p. 300. Spokanes 'free from the vice of incontinence.' Among the Walla Walla prostitution is unknown, 'and I believe no inducement would tempt them to commit a breach of chastity.' Prostitution common on the Fraser. Cox's *Adven.*, vol. i., pp. 145, 199-200. Nez Percé women remarkable for their chastity. Alford, in *Schoolcraft's Arch.*, vol. v., p. 655.